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137 *mirayila* tree (*Sclerocarya caffra*), from which such delightful cider is
[272] made. In the distance you hear the hoarse note of a *phalafala* horn, then the shrill ululations of women. They come nearer. You can hear them shout the words, '*Malematsha nee, Malematsha nee; budi ga dzwala ga*
[33] *dzwala ga fidzia, ga vutla nyahuloni*' (Malematsha, Malematsha, the goat I bore, I bore and miscarried, as a greeting ' returned)—the praise
431 song of a district in Uzoweda. Then at a bend in the road you come upon a picturesque procession: in front walks a man, blower of the horn, followed by twenty women each with a calabash of beer placed in a basket on her head, a gift to the queen from the area of Malematsha. Perspiration runs down their faces; but they do not lose courage, for before they arrive at at their destination they will sit down by the roadside to quench their thirst from one or two of the calabashes they carry. Any one who then happens to pass will beg for a little, and he will not beg in vain.

576 You continue your way. A pigsty and an ash heap mark the approach
[364] to a village. A passer-by, spying a woman about her household duties, shouts her greetings, '*Re fishaledzwi*' ('Still our hunger') to which comes the reply, '*Fishaledzwi nemu*,' a conventional refusal, but equivalent to 'Be hungry nicely' or 'Still your own hunger.' A second woman supplements it with the information, 'We have only just put on the pot.' If the food had been ready or the woman had wished to give the passer-by a tit-bit, the reply would have been, 'Here is food. We are eating.' That one of the ways of greeting should be associated with the begging of food is typical of the Lovedu. Some one returning from a visit to another area is greeted with, 'What are they eating over there,' or 'What are they stinting us of,' and the reply invariably is, 'They are being killed by hunger,' even if there is plenty and you have been royally entertained. There are greetings associated with activities: if you pass a man or woman working in the fields, you say, 'Workers,' and the modest reply is, 'We are hardly working at all'; to a woman carrying wood, you say, '*A di voyi dikhunye*' ('Let the wood return') and the reply is, '*Di voyile*' (It has returned). In fact, learning to greet people politely in the Lovedu language is not at all the simple thing it is in English.

621 At last you find yourself before the village of Raselaka, larger than any
789 of those you have passed on the way and, unlike many of them, surrounded by a thick hedge of thorny *lenzhua* bush (*Pterolobium exosum*). At the entrance you trip over a slate-coloured river-stone, jutting out a few inches above ground. This is a charm, laid when the village was built, to keep out the witches; it makes them cool, causing them to forget their evil designs. It is part of a more comprehensive scheme for the
[417] protection of the village: the gate posts are of special wood (*khirale* or
824 *modutu*, *Celtis Kraussiana*) smeared with medicines on the day they were set up; round the circumference are medicated pegs (*diphaba*) of *khirale*, the whole being completed by the magic circle drawn by the sister or father's sister, if she is still alive, who drags a 'doctored' branch of thorny *mukhalo* (*Zizyphus mucronata*) round the circumference. If this is not done by her before the doctor begins his work, it must be done subsequently, when the precaution of smearing the soles of her feet with medicine is taken lest by entering she 'opens up a way for witches'. The

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food as often as not being brought to them there. Sometimes the women take with them cobs of mealies preserved by being cooked and dried in the summer months, which they have softened by boiling again before use. In stony places and along steep hillsides, where ploughing is impossible, hoeing is to-day still done by hand. Here one can generally see mealie meal spread out to dry near at hand, out of reach of the fowls and goats that would play havoc with it at home, where there is no one to watch it. For it is chiefly the women that hoe while the men plough. Bushes or branches that have grown out from tree stumps in the fields are cut in readiness for planting, and a typical feature of this time of the year is the small fires in the fields every day towards sunset, when dry mealie stalks that have been collected in heaps are burned. Relishes have been reduced to a minimum, blackjacks (*Bidens pilosa*), *thzele* (*Amaranthus Thunbergi*) and *mufye* (*Solanum nigrum*) being the mainstay, and cooking is done only once a day. There are no nuts or mealies to roast or eat casually, and in years of scarcity this is the time when the pinch of hunger is felt. At night people retire early to bed, tired from the hard work of planting and, later, weeding during the day. Dancing is rare; there is no time for social activities, all energy being directed towards getting the crops planted. Beer parties there are, chiefly work parties for weeding, but they are not as frequent now as in winter. As yet few cases of malaria will have come to light; it is rather the season of dysentery and of cuts and bruises received in hoeing. As the season advances, the first termites make their appearance to relieve the monotony of relish of blackjack leaves, the grass grows longer and weeding becomes imperative.

As a relief to the dullness of the planting season comes the *murula* season, which marks the first two months of 'summer' (February and March) and which from the point of view of seasonal activities can be looked upon as a distinctive period. Everything is green; the grass stands high and weeding is the order of the day, for rain is plentiful. Masses of golden *murula* fruits are falling to the ground. Green mealies from the first-planted fields are beginning to be eaten, spinach of male pumpkin flowers and, later, leaves, make porridge cakes more interesting; and there are sugar-cane and dishes of unripe monkey nuts. People have looked forward eagerly to this time. They are tired of their work and, though much weeding and mounding of *ngogo* beans has still to be done, the exultation grows as the cider begins to appear. To those whose granaries are empty, the *murula* season brings a blessed relief from the pangs of hunger, and they drink it as if it were the elixir of life. Much of the day is spent in the fields where the cider is prepared, and from under the trees there is a mighty hubbub of voices. At nightfall, when they return as from a bacchanalian festival, there are opportunities for romantic intrigues, the result rather of exhilaration than of the reputed aphrodisiac effects of the cider. Soon the air is rent by songs and drumming of the possessed, who at this season receive medicine to ease with the *murula* and other green foods of summer. And as the *murula* season draws to a close, the green foods of summer become more plentiful and the beginning of reaping activities ushers in the rich abundance of late summer.